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**NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION KICKS OFF
2009 JUNIOR RANGER ESSAY CONTEST**

WASHINGTON, DC (March 24, 2008) – The National Park Foundation is proud to announce the launch of the 2009 Junior Ranger Essay Contest, asking youth across the country to share their big ideas on how to protect and preserve America's National Parks.

This year, the National Park Foundation is asking students aged 9 to 12 this question: ***Why are our national parks important to you and what is your best idea to protect our parks for the future?***

The First Prize winner will receive a \$1,000 Visa gift card and the opportunity to direct a \$5,000 contribution from the National Park Foundation to his or her favorite national park. This contribution will be used to help put into action big ideas like those included in the winning essay.

Kids aged 9 to 12, with the help of a parent or guardian, have through May 1, 2009 to submit an essay of no more than 500 words. Entries may be submitted online at www.nationalparks.org/essaycontest or by mail at:

National Park Foundation
ATTN: 2009 Junior Ranger Essay Contest
1201 Eye Street N.W.
Suite 550-B
Washington, D.C. 20005

The 2009 National Park Foundation Junior Ranger Essay Contest is sponsored by Unilever, Proud Partner of America's National Parks, as part of the its ongoing commitment to the National Park Junior Ranger program.

To submit your entry online and view the official rules, visit www.nationalparks.org/essaycontest.

About the National Park Foundation The National Park Foundation is an independent charitable organization chartered by Congress in 1967 to strengthen the connection between the American people and their national parks. As the official national non-profit partner of America's National Parks, the Foundation raises private funds, makes strategic grants, creates

innovative partnerships and increases public awareness about the need and opportunity for park philanthropy. In its 2008 fiscal year, the National Park Foundation distributed grants and program support of \$27.3M. To learn more, visit www.nationalparks.org.

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